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18. Portugal. Discreet Populisms Amid Unfavorable Contexts and Stigmatization

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Introduction

Neither populism nor populist political communication has been the subject of systematic academic research in Portugal. The studies that address populism in a direct manner are scarce, and in the past, the expressions *populist party*, *populist politician*, and *populist discourse* have not been commonly used in the media and in national politics. In the last few years, however, the word *populism*, or expressions related to it, has increasingly become a favorite catchword for both politicians and the media. It may be that the use of the expression in the Portuguese political and media environments—in particular, by commentators—is simply a reflection of the expression's common use across Europe in more recent years; or perhaps interest in the phenomenon is growing. If so, this apparent greater interest has not yet been translated into Portuguese academic literature.

In addition, when these expressions are used, it is in a pejorative sense to criticize either the way in which politics is conducted (a policy orientation or a policy proposal, say) or a different style of political communication—which usually entails more direct ways of addressing voters, open demands for political and parliamentary reforms, and criticisms of the political system. Interestingly, the researchers who use the words *populism* or *populist* to designate a particular style of politics and a particular type of politician frequently link it to media prominence and visibility (for instance, Costa, 2011; Jalali, 2007; Vitorino & Fernandes, 2000). These assessments have not been further developed in research.

Noteworthy usages of the word *populism* in the national media and politics appeared in descriptions of the 2014 Socialist Party primary (PS) (including, for instance, some reactions to António Seguro's proposal to reduce the number of members of parliament) and to some recent Social Democratic Party (PSD) government proposals. The description was applied to some politicians who have appeared on the Portuguese political stage in recent years displaying different styles of communication and campaigning, including different forms of addressing the electorate, which can be seen as an attempt to capitalize on popular discontent. Such was the case of Fernando Nobre, 2011 presidential candidate (physician and president of a non-governmental organization), who promoted the self-image of an outsider, of being different from the other politicians. The same applies to Marinho e Pinto, current minister in the European Parliament and leader of a new political party, whose populist traits are further explained later in this chapter.

Research on Populism in Portugal

The words *populism* and *populist* are used here and there in some academic works, but usually in a general sense and not as the subject of research itself. Noteworthy studies that we found in our literature search (1995–2014, using titles and abstracts) made it clear that in the Portuguese research environment, populism is often equated with radical-right parties and discourses (Costa, 2008; Costa, 2011; Costa Pinto, 1995; Marchi, 2012, 2013; Rocha,

2012; Zúquete, 2007a), with some political leaders (including local leaders) (Jalali, 2007; Santos, 2008; Vitorino & Fernandes, 2000), and with a social movement (Mendes, 2004, 2005). In addition, most Portuguese politicians and political parties that are somehow related to populism in the research exhibit some populist features but are usually not publicly identified as populist, unlike many of their foreign counterparts.

Despite the small number of references found, it is possible to note some complexities, in particular in what seem to be apparently contradictory conceptualizations of populism. There are no empirical analyses of populism or of populist political communication, and very few explanatory attempts were found. This outcome seems to suggest that the issue has not been rigorously investigated in Portugal, at least not in the literature published in the national language, which means that further theoretical and empirical elaboration is required.

Concerning the development of research on the concept of populism and the publication of work on this topic in Portugal, populism has not been often addressed directly as a subject per se; in the few instances that it had been studied, it was mainly discussed in the context of populist politicians or populist political parties, and conceptualizations proposed by other authors were applied. It should be noted, however, that the Portuguese researcher Zúquete (2007b, 2013) applied the concept of “missionary politics” to populism but did not focus specifically on Portuguese politics. Resorting to cases in Europe and South America, Zúquete developed the concept of missionary politics as a contemporary example of the sacralization of politics. His study demonstrated that missionary politics is a form of political religion led by charismatic leaders geared toward a mission of salvation: It transcends populism and goes beyond a mere identification with the people, offering an integrated view of the world.

In the sample composed of studies published in Portuguese, there are thus no attempts to conceptualize populism or populist politics based on their particular manifestations in the national context and the specific traits of Portuguese politicians and politics. The theoretical framings most commonly used in the research published in Portuguese were proposed by Mény and Surel (2002), Merkl and Weinberg (2003), and Mudde (2000, 2007). For instance, Costa (2008) uses a definition from Merkl and Weinberg (2003), in which these authors explain how popular resentments and mistrust are mobilized against specific targets—usually the political elites and their official interpretations of events—with the objective of destabilizing their power. These strategies are most successful when there is a charismatic leader calling for political renewal and profound democratic reforms.

Rocha (2012) frames his analysis through the ideological and rhetorical components of populism pointed out by Mudde (2007) and by Mény and Surel (2002). Mudde’s (2007) interpretation refers to populism as an ideological characteristic that justifies and potentiates the clear protest nature of populist politicians and parties, their anti-system positions, and calls for changes in the current organization of political power in liberal democracies. Mény and Surel (2002) see populism as “an empty shell, which can be filled and made meaningful by whatever is poured into it” (p. 6). More specifically, Rocha (2012) uses the expression to refer to a rhetorical political style aimed at mobilizing the electorate against the power structure and whose legitimacy is ultimately supported by the people and against the elites (p. 9).

In Portugal, the expression *populist politics* has also been used by commentators in the context of local politics. A few local politicians, such as Fátima Felgueiras, Avelino Ferreira Torres, Isaltino Morais, and Valentim Loureiro, have been called populists. Following Jagers and Walgrave’s (2007) proposal, their type of populism could be classified as *anti-elitism*

populism. These local politicians have one other thing in common—they were all subjects of criminal investigations regarding corruption and misuse of political power.

The sociologist Ruivo wrote opinion articles relating these politicians to populism and describing the consequences of such a style of politics; he did not, however, translate these short opinion pieces into academic research, nor did he publish any scholarly work focusing on these politicians and their populism. Ruivo (2005) relates the electoral success of these candidates to the way they have presented themselves as belonging to the people, with whom they have a direct relationship. Against the backdrop of growing disbelief in national political institutions, the personal and proximity dimensions are extremely important in local politics, and these candidates were perceived as being part of local identities and therefore belonging to the local people. Local identity is thus subsumed into the notion of political trust.

Santos, one of Valentin Loureiro's media advisers, wrote a book in 2008, which is more the result of practitioner insight than of academic research. It is, however, one of the few examples of a published work in Portugal that refers to populism directly, and it also addresses some of the electoral strategies of this highly visible local politician. Loureiro, a former military officer (a major in the army), was mayor of Gondomar and chairman of a football club and of the professional Portuguese football league for several years while accumulating other positions in companies such as the Metro do Porto. He was involved in a sports corruption scandal and found guilty of abuse of power. He is also known for his peculiar personal style and his distinctive electoral campaigns, which often included the offer of domestic appliances to the population.

This book describes how Loureiro dealt with the press and journalists and explains some of his strategies to win popular support and votes. A different part is dedicated to some reflections on how the electoral victories of the so-called populist politicians (Loureiro, Morais, and Felgueiras) were interpreted and handled by their political parties of origin, the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Party (after the criminal lawsuits, they lost party support and ran as independent candidates). According to Santos (2008), contrary to expectations, these political parties have not tried to understand the reasons behind these victories, and instead, they have applied all their resources to preventing these candidates from running for office again.

Jardim, the former president of the regional government of Madeira and an unusually long-serving, democratically elected, political leader (having served from 1978 until he stepped down in 2015), has also been a recurrent example of a populist style of communication in Portugal. Yet, there are almost no references to this case study of populism in the academic literature. Magone (2004) refers to Jardim's "charismatic populism," linking it to "personalism" (p. 75), which is, according to him, an important feature of Portuguese politics, but the idea is not further developed or analyzed.

Throughout the decades, this right-wing leader developed a discourse in which his government, and consequently the people of Madeira, were constantly under attack, whether by the political class of mainland Portugal (and its minions on the island), by the cultural and political left, or by the mainstream media. To further accentuate his separation from the political elites, Jardim always portrayed himself as a common man, using unadorned language, rude if necessary, and socializing freely with the citizens of Madeira. His leadership

is an example of *anti-elitist populism*, with occasional advances into *excluding populism*. However, even on the occasions when his populism could potentially be characterized as *complete populism*, some kind of gradation needs be included in the analysis because it is by no means similar to the complete populism of the National Renewal Party (PNR).

There are mainly two parties that have been labeled populist in Portugal: the Democratic and Social Center–People’s Party (CDS-PP) and, most obviously, the National Renewal Party. In the case of CDS-PP, certain populist features of some of its leaders, namely Monteiro and Portas, both in political discourse and in policy proposals, have been pointed out occasionally in research (e.g., Vitorino & Fernandes, 2000; Jalali, 2007). However, these interpretations have not thus far been further developed through a focused approach in specific studies; in other words, these examples of populist features and populist political communication have not received in-depth academic attention.

While analyzing the crisis of political representation in Portugal, Vitorino and Fernandes (2000) discussed some of the characteristics of the parliamentary political parties. They referred to an absence of strategy by the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and to its popular discourse, which was being neutralized by “CDS-PP’s populism.” These authors mention the CDS-PP’s prominence in the media. Resorting to a populist style, Monteiro’s 1990s leadership pushed forward the public debate on issues such as security, the reinforcement of social protection for national citizens, the primacy of national law, and national independence over any supranational projects. The politicization of these issues also involved the CDS-PP’s support for more restrictive immigration laws, more severe security policies, and a Euroskeptic platform (with a clear rejection of the project of a federal Europe). Under the leadership of Monteiro, CDS-PP’s populism occasionally veered into complete populism (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007); but here, too, some scale of populist features would be useful because Monteiro’s position was never as radical as the National Renewal Party’s extreme complete populism.

After electoral losses and internal divisions and rivalries, Monteiro was replaced in the party’s leadership by Portas in 1996. Under the leadership of Portas, and after the 2002 legislative election, the integration of CDS-PP in a government coalition led the party to moderate its nationalist discourse and to realign its positioning toward European integration, even if Portas kept his distinctive and popular communication style.

The other populist party pointed out by researchers (Costa, 2011; Marchi, 2012; Zúquete, 2007a) is the National Renewal Party, which is a prime example of *complete populism* (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). The National Renewal Party’s worldview is firmly anchored in a rigid dichotomy between the evil elites and the good (even if sometimes misguided) people. Focusing on the anti-systemic nature of the party, Zúquete (2007a) explains that its exceptionalism is a recurrent topic in the party’s discourse; it is the polarization between the party of the nation and the politicians of the system. “We, and only we,” the president Coelho explains, “courageously assume the struggle for national sovereignty and for the rights of the Portuguese”, and using a common expression of French nationalist Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Renewal Party’s president vows to “say out loud what the people think in silence.” (Zúquete, 2007a, p. 185). The nation’s survival thus hinges upon awakening the rest of the people, who are repeatedly manipulated and lied to by the “system” and the media about the evils afflicting the country.

Since the National Renewal Party's main focus is preserving the nation's identity, its discourse targets the internal and external forces that it perceives to be responsible for the decadence plaguing the nation. This aspect is the wellspring of the party's anti-system nature, its constant repudiation of Portugal's mainstream parties, media, and cultural elites. These disparate and diverse elements of Portuguese society are blended into what the party deems "the system," a monolithic concept composed of "the established parties, the media, the leftist cultural dictatorship, [and] the inhuman and multinational [forces] of capitalism" which thrive on using "lies and manipulation" to keep the population complacent (Zúquete 2007a, pp. 184–185).

According to Costa (2011), the National Renewal Party represents the latest development in the history of far-right parties in Portugal. It occupied a niche unclaimed by any other party, breaking with the universalist and multiracial tradition of Portuguese nationalism. The National Renewal Party also rejects any project that diminishes national sovereignty, including the European Union. Created in 2000, this party established itself as the Portuguese manifestation of a new lineage of nationalist-populist parties in Western Europe. However, as Costa notes, despite having acquired a visibility that was unprecedented among its predecessors in the democratic era, its performance on the electoral stage did not alter the marginal status of the Portuguese far right. Marchi (2012) agrees with this analysis of the negligible position of the National Renewal Party in Portuguese politics:

[T]he PNR's attempt to exploit the crises of post-industrial societies (mistrust of politics, immigration, precariousness of employment, pauperization of the middle class), eventually introduced the innovations of the European radical right, but this has yet to produce any appreciable results. (p. 107)

Zúquete (2007a), Costa (2011), and Marchi (2012) place the National Renewal Party within the party family of European ethno-nationalist, radical-right parties including the German People's Union, The Republicans (Germany), the Danish Peoples Party, the Sweden Democrats, Vlaams Belang (Belgium), Lega Nord (Italy) and, in particular, Front National (France), the most inspiring example for the National Renewal Party. In its manifesto, "the party stresses the primacy of security over freedom, using a populist rhetoric against the political system and the foundations of a participative democracy" (Costa, 2011, p. 777). It clearly positions itself as an anti-system party, which, given the growing dissatisfaction and alienation of citizens from politics (Magalhaes, 2005), could be an electoral opportunity. Nonetheless, after a long period of right-wing dictatorship, there is still some resistance in Portugal to extreme-right parties and organizations.

This diffuse, cultural resistance to far-right movements and parties is an important contextual factor and is partly explained by the burden that was inherited from the Salazar dictatorship and continues to weigh down society and politics to this day. The stigma of the dictatorship is reflected in the Constitution (revised in 2005), which imposes some degree of illegality on fascist and racist organizations. Such factors have been more decisive in regard to the fate of the populist extreme right in Portugal than growing immigration and the economic crisis (Costa, 2011, p. 784).

The stigmatization of populist approaches to politics has also influenced the way political actors have recently reacted to the economic crisis, to the constraints on national sovereignty imposed by the Troika's decisions, and to the austerity measures. Apparently a fertile ground for anti-system parties, especially considering the discrediting of mainstream political parties,

these conditions have mostly produced new parties and movements whose stated objectives clearly show a positioning inside—not outside—the institutionalized political processes. LIVRE/Tempo de Avançar (FREE/Time to Move Forward), for instance, was created to strengthen the left against the Social Democratic Party/CDS-PP right-wing coalition and to facilitate potential post-electoral coalitions on the left with the Socialist Party (the incompatible differences between the Socialist Party, the Communist Party (PCP), and the Left Block (BE) are well known).

Populist Actors as Communicators

The communicative and media aspects of populism and of populist actors are rarely addressed in the research published in Portugal. Some studies about populist political parties and politicians occasionally mention some elements related to the media and communication in general, but these broad considerations are not further developed or supported by any empirical analysis.

One example is Costa's (2011) article that suggests that Jean-Marie Le Pen inspired Coelho's communication strategy (the leader of the National Renewal Party); media exposure would lead to public visibility and more votes (p. 785). Marchi (2013) refers to this strategy in more detail:

[T]he focus in the first few years of Pinto Coelho's party presidency was on gaining publicity, with provocative actions tailor-made to attract the attention of the national media. ... Initially, campaigns to boost the party's media visibility did enjoy some success, offering the spectacle of demonstrations that were rather unusual in the context of the Portuguese political agenda: against Turkish membership in the EU, against adoptions by homosexual couples, against the decriminalization of abortion, against increasing levels of immigration from Brazil. (p. 139)

Amateurism, a lack of strategies designed to improve communication with the public, and the scant charisma of the leader of the National Renewal Party, who has not been able to win the media's and the public's sympathy, are also pointed out by Marchi (2013), who explains that "unlike other extreme-right groupings across Europe, the PNR did not derive any added value from promoting its policies through its leader's personal magnetism" (p. 140).

The National Renewal Party has incorporated topics typical of other European extreme-right parties (anti-Islamism, anti-immigration, etc.) and has adopted a populist language with strong traces of identity politics and protest. It has also tried to raise national awareness of the party through unconventional events in order to ensure media attention. However, despite its efforts, the National Renewal Party has not increased its membership and votes in a consequential manner. Another important explanatory factor for its lack of success so far is the direct competition of the more moderate right-wing CDS-PP for issues and voters. As Marchi (2013) explains on immigration, "the CDS-PP has managed to formulate a legalistic political discourse entirely devoid of racist overtones and more in tune with the general mood in Portugal" (p. 153).

The Media and Populism

The bibliographic search did not find any relevant references to academic publications that focus specifically on populism in the media or on the study of the media coverage of populism. In most cases, there are only mentions of the media that are not supported by systematic media research. The only noteworthy exception is Mendes's research (2005),

which, although not entirely focused on the media, includes some description of the media coverage of a social movement.

For the most part, Portuguese media, particularly quality newspapers and mainstream TV channels, are hostile toward manifestations of political populism and try to critically deconstruct it. The National Renewal Party, for example, like most populist political parties and actors, is usually covered in a negative tone, implying “an extremist group nostalgic for the former authoritarian regime” (Marchi, 2013, p. 150).

Overall—whether in editorials, commentaries, or analyses—populism is equated with simple-mindedness, lack of sophistication, and an overly emotional and moralistic approach to politics. Populism is also viewed as dangerous, leading ultimately to the weakening of democracy and its procedures and institutions, and favoring personalistic and plebiscitary political regimes. It is common for political actors in Portugal to delegitimize each other’s policies or proposals by labeling them populist and thus simplistic and unworthy of serious debate. Pundits have described populism as “the foolish hope of appealing to the heart” (Correia de Campos, 2014), a “terrorism of ideas” (Rangel, 2014), or “a shortcut to dictatorship” (Valente, 2007).

Not surprisingly, the president of the Republic, the highest political authority, in his 2015 New Year’s message to the country, decried populism as inherently threatening to the status quo: “I absolutely reject the demagogic and populist idea that some want to spread in public opinion that political parties and their officials are out of tune with the interests of the country” (Cavaco Silva, 2015).

Mendes’s research (2004, 2005) is focused on the Canas de Senhorim popular demonstrations and election boycotts. This local social movement was created by the population of Canas de Senhorim, a civil parish in the central region of Portugal that sought the elevation of its locality to a municipality. Occasional conflicts lingered on for several years. Mendes described in detail the media coverage of these events and concluded that journalists did not sufficiently contextualize these popular demands; they reproduced mainly negative images, contributing to a negative framing of this issue and the protesters. Journalists, analysts, and commentators were clearly against the creation of new municipalities and disapproved the parliamentary discussion of this issue. In addition, they argued that any concession by the parliament would mean the legitimization of illegal and extreme actions.

Mendes (2005) interprets these news stories and comments as reflecting a narrow vision of democracy of an elitist political system because, according to these journalists and commentators, “citizenship simply means the acceptance of parliamentary decisions.” (p. 172). Both the media and the political elites framed the Canas de Senhorim case in a manner that served the interests of the established hierarchies, with the objective of restoring the usual order of things. This motive also explains the violence not only of the political authorities’ reaction but also of the police against the protesters, particularly during the election boycotts.

If the dominant tone in the media is harsh and negative, there are also voices in the public sphere that criticize the demonization of populism by the mainstream political class and punditry. The “paranoid vigilantes of populism” are guilty of “demophobia,” or “the arrogance of self-enlightened elites that are contemptuous toward the voice of the people” (Guerreiro, 2015), while populism may well represent a “renewal of democracy in a

purser and more direct fashion” (Gonçalves, 2014). Mendes (2004, 2005) makes similar observations.

Citizens and Populism

Research on citizens and populism is also not very common. We found the two, above-mentioned works by Mendes (2004, 2005), which are focused on the Canas de Senhorim social movement. In them, populism is used in the context of mobilizing civil society. Although Mendes’s research does not directly address the issue of effects on citizens, it deals with how these events were framed by the political elites and also offers a detailed descriptive account of the negative media coverage of these events, which may influence the manner in which such actors and events are perceived by citizens.

Mendes’s study (2005) uses Dupuy’s *Politique du Peuple* (2002) as an analytical framework, which examines how the established elites discursively build and frame both popular demonstrations and the citizens who lead those demonstrations. They tend to be incorporated in a descriptive rather than an analytical concept of populism. Additionally, Mendes uses Collovald’s conceptualization of populism (2004, 2005), in which special attention is given to forms of conservatism and authoritarianism that are created by charismatic leaders, while popular mobilizations are perceived as something irrational. According to Collovald (2005), this re- conceptualization of populism, which initially was mainly connected to left-wing movements, happened in the second half of the 20th century and ended up legitimizing the political elites while disqualifying the actions, claims, and protests of the people, the actual matrix of democracy (p. 225).

Another subject related to citizens and populism is the citizen’s support and vote for populist parties. Despite some increase, the weight of the extreme right is marginal. The National Renewal Party gained less than 0.5% of the vote in the 2011 national parliamentary elections and the 2014 European parliamentary elections. In the moderate-right CDS-PP’s populist phase (from the early 1990s), its results were more impressive; it has been gaining between 8% and roughly 12% of the vote in national and European parliamentary elections.

Studies on the motivations and demographics of National Renewal Party voters and CDS-PP voters are also scarce, but Freire (2000) and Jalali (2003) noted younger voters in the CDS-PP electorate in the 1995 national elections as well as a decrease in its share of rural voters. And in the 1999 elections, the CDS-PP had better results in the counties where unemployment was higher (Freire, 2000).

Summary and Recent Developments

Portuguese scholarship on populism—especially in the Portuguese language about Portuguese case studies—is still incipient and needs further, systematic research. Although, as mentioned, there have been examples over time of populist actors in the country, a significant populist challenge to the Portuguese political establishment has yet to take place. The major political parties have had a strong grip on a substantial part of the electorate. Nevertheless, the economic crisis and the burden of austerity as well as the all-time low levels of trust in democracy, its institutions, and national political elites indicate a social and political climate that, in theory, is favorable to populist political actors, whether from the left or the right (European Commission, 2014).

Noteworthy examples of recent developments are the new left-wing social movements and Marinho e Pinto, both illustrating cases of anti-elitist populism (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

Protest movements—outside of traditional institutions and political parties—have been on the rise, particularly after the financial and economic crisis, and the passing of austerity measures by the center-right Social Democratic Party/CDS-PP coalition government. Although the protests have not been as successful regarding collective mobilization as some of their foreign counterparts, they have been part of the cycle of protests that have included the anti-austerity revolts in Greece, the Indignados in Spain, and the international Occupy movement (Estanque, Costa, & Soeiro, 2013).

Several social movements—such as the 12 March Movement, or “Screw the Troika”—have emerged from what has come to be known as the Struggling Generation. Several dimensions of populism characterize these movements of social contestation: appeals to the people (who have been abused by the political and financial elites), polarizing rhetoric (“us” against “them”), anti-system rhetoric and dismissal of the traditional political elite, aversion to representative politics (or “politics-as-usual”), and demands for an unmediated and “real” democracy that reasserts popular sovereignty (which has been weakened and corrupted) at its essence.

Although the issue will benefit from more research, the presence of these dimensions in the political communication of these movements—whether verbal or symbolic through the use of images, posters, videos, graffiti’s, and so on—justify their inclusion as an example of anti-elitist populism (in this case progressive and left-wing) in contemporary Portugal.

Although a very recent case study (thus lacking academic research underpinnings), the swift rise in politics and the style of Marinho e Pinto merit his inclusion as a populist actor. Even before entering electoral politics (in the European elections of 2014), Marinho e Pinto, as the president of the Portuguese Bar Association and the guest of current affairs TV shows, managed to promote an image of an independent, tell-it-like-it-is person who never minced his words about the evils of the system (whether political, economic, or judiciary) and to constantly further his image as someone who speaks, acts, and thinks like the people, sharing the people’s common sense and aversion to corruption and to the degradation of the nation’s moral fabric. Marinho e Pinto did all this while assailing the rest (mostly politicians, judges, or technocrats) for being out of touch with the people.

At the age of 64, he was elected to the European Parliament, even though he ran as a candidate of a tiny political party—the Earth Party—which was not represented in the national parliament. His personal standing was immensely superior to the political party; a political commentator discussing on the 2014 European election results and the rise of populist parties in Europe accurately stated that, because of the primacy of the person over the party, the only candidate who ran as a “Portuguese populist” was Marinho e Pinto (Marques, 2014). Soon after, the newly elected representative to the European parliament cut his ties to the Earth Party and founded the Democratic Republican Party (PDR) to run in the 2015 national elections. Marinho e Pinto saw the new PDR as a “people’s party that wanted to change the country,” and he promised to “give democracy back to the people, taking it away” from the “self-serving political caste” in order to “prevent the suicide of the country”: in short, “the new party will be a new April 25th [the date of the Portuguese democratic revolution] without the tanks” (Marinho e Pinto, cited in Paulo, 2014).

All the while, and as another sign of anti-elitist populism, Marinho e Pinto portrays himself and the party as victims of the media’s hostility because they represent the only real challengers to the status quo: “The conspiracy of silence launched against us does not

demoralize us. It only shows that they are afraid” (Revez, 2015). After all, “I will make alliances even with the devil, if that is helpful to the people” (Lopes, 2014). It seems that the status of Marinho e Pinto as a self-proclaimed outsider in Portuguese politics will continue in the near future.

To sum up, further systematic research is needed, in particular, about the impact of populism’s discourse both on the media and on the electorate. Empirical analysis of case-studies will paint a fuller picture of the dynamics of populist political communication in contemporary Portugal. Insights from electoral and political sociology to help understand which social groups are more susceptible to the appeals of populist politicians and their motivations are also needed. Such research would also provide insights into why some populist actors are more successful in some countries. The inclusion of the Portuguese case study in cross-national comparative research would for its part develop integrated knowledge on the similarities and differences of various political processes and approaches to populist political communication.

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